



SENATOR

Rosemary McAuliffe

E-Newsletter - 1st District, Bothell

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1st Legislative District

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Dear Neighbors,

Issues of great importance at the state and national level are healthcare reform, education reform, and local unemployment. In this e-newsletter I expand on updates pertaining to these issues.

Also of note is the [revenue forecast](#) that was released Thursday, September 17, 2009. The Economic and Revenue Forecast Council prepares a quarterly state economic and revenue forecast for our state. The last quarterly forecast claimed the worst of the economic recession appeared to be over. This forecast, with a revenue decline far below declines seen over the past 18 months, confirms what other economic indicators appear to be telling us. The forecast indicated the recession in Washington appears over, the economy and state revenues appear to be hitting bottom and an economic recovery may be near, although consumer spending will continue to be a major factor. Although this is encouraging news, we're going to feel the aftermath of this economic crisis for quite some time.

As these efforts continue, I look forward to updating you.

Sincerely,

Rosemary McAuliffe
State Senator

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Health care reform hits home

Health care reform is shaping up to be one of the most important federal public policy issues of our time. Whichever reform proposal congress passes, it will be up to the states to implement the new rules.

Committee chairs in both the Senate and the House of Representatives have been hosting town hall meetings on health care reform in cities across the state.

They've answered questions from hundreds of people about current federal options and what the Legislature has done over the last decade to address the problem. Some of those solutions include requiring insurance companies to adopt uniform standards and forms to reduce administrative costs. It is important to point out our state established the first-in-the-nation Health Technology Assessment program that established an independent, clinical committee to determine which medical treatments are safe and effective and provide good value to patients.

Not everyone agrees on how to overhaul the system, but most agree changes are necessary because of skyrocketing health care costs. Since 2000, average family premiums have increased by 103 percent in our state. Family premiums now average \$13,216 a year — about equal to the annual income from a minimum wage job. A Washington state survey showed about 725,000 people are without insurance, but a recent from U.S. Census data indicates that this number has increased to 850,000.

I welcome you to attend the **1st District Health Care Reform Town Hall** on **Monday, November 30th from 6 – 8 p.m.** **(location to be decided)**. We will be joined by Senator Keiser, chair of the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee and Representative Cody, chair of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. Please contact Carolyn in my office with questions regarding the town hall at (360) 786-7600.

'Shared work' solutions can forestall layoffs

This recession has taken a heavy toll on jobs in our state, but some companies are avoiding layoffs with the help of the Employment Security Department.

The state's [Shared-Work Program](#) lets employers temporarily reduce the work hours of full-time employees by up to 50 percent while workers collect partial unemployment benefits to replace some of their lost wages. The employees receive more income than with unemployment benefits alone, and they aren't forced to look for new jobs in this tough economy. Businesses, meanwhile, benefit by cutting payroll costs while keeping their skilled workers until the economy improves.

Here in Washington, about 2,000 businesses and 42,000 employees are participating in the program. In a recent survey, 56 percent of participating employers said the Shared-Work Program has helped them survive the recession, and another 22 percent felt it probably had. Eighty-eight percent said they'd recommend it to other employers.

To learn more about the program, click on the above hyperlink or call 800-752-2500.

Education Reform

In 2009, the Legislature continued work to rebuild our basic education system so that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We must support our teachers and involve parents so that our students can compete in the global economy.

The corner stone of the reform is [House Bill 2261](#) — The Basic Ed Reform Bill.

The [Quality Education Council](#) (QEC) is tasked with steering the ongoing implementation of the Basic Education Reform Bill while also developing a 10-year vision for education in Washington that is updated every four years. For a list of the members involved, click [here](#).

I invite you to stay involved in the process by following some of the groups created by the Basic Education Reform Bill. Some of these work groups have already begun meeting, others are not scheduled to start work until a future date. Meetings are always open to the public.

- [K-12 Data Governance Group](#)
- [Compensation Work Group](#)
- [Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee](#)
- [Funding Formula Work Group](#)
- Local Funding Working Group (currently no website, work begins in 2010)

Recently, Senator Oemig and I conducted a Listening Tour across Washington State to hear voices of teachers regarding education reform. I invite PTA/PTO's, and education stakeholders to contact me about bringing a Listening Tour to their meetings or conferences. I look forward to hearing from you regarding our work.

To learn more about our programs, click [here](#).

Unemployment sees slight bump

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate crept up to 9.2 percent last month, up from 8.9 percent in July, as the state Employment Security Department reports we lost an estimated 8,000 non-agricultural jobs in August, seasonally adjusted, after a revised gain of 11,800 jobs in July.

At the same time, a small gain in construction — the first growth in that sector since January 2008 — suggests cause for cautious optimism in that industry.

Industries with the largest declines were in professional and business services, which cut 2,500 jobs; retail trade, down 2,400; and education and health services, which lost 1,800 jobs. Industries with the most job growth included government, with 1,800 new jobs; leisure and hospitality, which added 800; transportation, warehousing and utilities, up 700; and construction, up 200.

[Employment Security](#) offers assessment and training opportunities through local WorkSource career centers, along with employment and training services such as free help with interviewing skills or résumés and with job referrals.

[WorkSource Bothell](#), a new WorkSource one-stop center serving Snohomish County and North King County, has recently opened, located at 18132 Bothell Way N.E., WorkSource Bothell is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays offering free job-search assistance, resume writing workshops and links to skills upgrade and training opportunities.

You can find other locations and more than 12,000 job openings located at: www.go2worksource.com. Assistance is also available by phone at 877-872-5627.